Stress Management Workshop

Aisling O’Brien
Outline of workshop

- Stress Facts
- Exercise in awareness
- Stress analysis day/week: looking at muscle tension, digestion, breathing, alertness, sleeping
- What thoughts exercise
- Personal resources
- Other commonly used resources
- Resourcing exercise
Stress Facts

- Definition: Stress is defined as a person’s total response to environmental demands or pressures.
- Eustress, or good stress, is stress that benefits our health, like physical exercise or getting a promotion. Distress on the other hand, is stress that harms our health and often results from imbalances between demands made upon us and our resources for dealing with these demands. However, if handled well stress can increase motivation and stimulate us. (TCD, 2003)
- If we have the resources to meet the demands of our environment, we can use stress in an effective way.
Symptoms of Stress

Physical and Behavioural Symptoms

- Racing heart
- Cold, sweaty hands
- Headaches
- Shallow or erratic breathing
- Nausea or upset tummy
- Constipation
- Shoulder or back pains
- Rushing around
- Working longer hours
- Losing touch with friends
- Fatigue
- Sleep disturbances
- Weight changes
Symptoms of Stress continued

- Cognitive Symptoms (or Thoughts)
  - Forgetting things
  - Finding it hard to concentrate
  - Worrying about things
  - Difficulty processing information
  - Negative self-statements
Symptoms of stress continued

- Emotional symptoms
  - Increased irritability or anger
  - Anxiety or feelings of panic
  - Fear
  - Tearfulness
  - Increased interpersonal conflicts
Body Awareness Exercise

- Where did you feel tense in your body?
- Where did you feel relaxed/well in your body?
Stress Analysis

- When do you feel most tense? (think of your muscle tension, digestion, alertness, tiredness).
- What thoughts coincide with this time?
- Go with these thoughts, follow them. Do you notice any changes in your body?
- Are you? overgeneralising, thinking in black and white, using selective attention, fortune telling, mind reading, using should statements, labelling yourself negatively.
The 3 A’s

- **Alter:**
  Remove the source of stress by changing something. Use problem solving, direct communication, organization, planning, time management.

- **Avoid:**
  Remove oneself from the stressful situation or figuring out how not to get there in the first place. Let go, say no”, delegate.

- **Accept:**
  Accept that the situation is stressful and resource yourself well so that you can deal with it. Also working to change your perception. See it as a challenge rather than as a threat.
Resourcing

■ When in the day do you feel most relaxed? (think of your muscle tension, digestion, alertness, sleepiness)
■ What were you doing, thinking during this time?
■ What resources do you
Commonly used resources

- Spending time with a friend/loved one
- Nature
- Exercise
- ‘Quiet time’
- Laughter
- Hobby/interest
- Music
- Pets